

# Diligence and Faithfulness



Learning & Growing  
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If you're faithful in a few things, He'll  
make you ruler over many!

By Amber Darley and Agnes Lemaire

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# Muwamba's Work Day

I am Muwamba, and I will tell you a little story of something that happened to me when I was young.

It was the time of harvest. We harvested our crops from morning till evening. It was a big job, too much for just the strong men. So my mother, sisters, brothers and I all helped father and the other men.

The work was more difficult than usual this time, because the tools that we used to harvest our food had been stolen from us just one month before. We had to borrow some tools from others, but they didn't have very many tools either, so many of us used our bare hands.

One day, as the heat of the sun was beating down upon us, I sat down in the shade of a tree to rest. We had been harvesting for a week and I was beginning to get weary in my task. As I drank from the container of water my mother had brought for us, I thought to myself, I wish I didn't have to do such hard work. I'm only a child. I wish I could run in the wind like the deer, or be like some of the other animals who seem to not have to do much work at all. My family was still hard at work and I knew I shouldn't leave them too long, so I rose up to do my part once more.

When the day was done, we sat to eat a pleasant meal that had been roasted over the fire, and again I thought of the freedom I wished I could have. Never does the grass look as green as the pasture you cannot run in.

I arose early the next day, while the sun was still coming up, with one thought on my mind. I wanted to be gone when my family rose up to face the day. I wanted to go where I could not be found or called upon to work in the fields. I wanted to spend the day alone with the creatures in the wild. I quietly packed some food and water for the day and off I went.

Noon time came and I guessed that my family would be wondering where I had been this long while. Perhaps they thought I was tending to other duties in some other part of our land. Never would they guess that I was disregarding my duties in this way. While they were all working in the heat of the sun, I lay under a shaded tree, watching the birds, and hearing creatures calling out to each other.

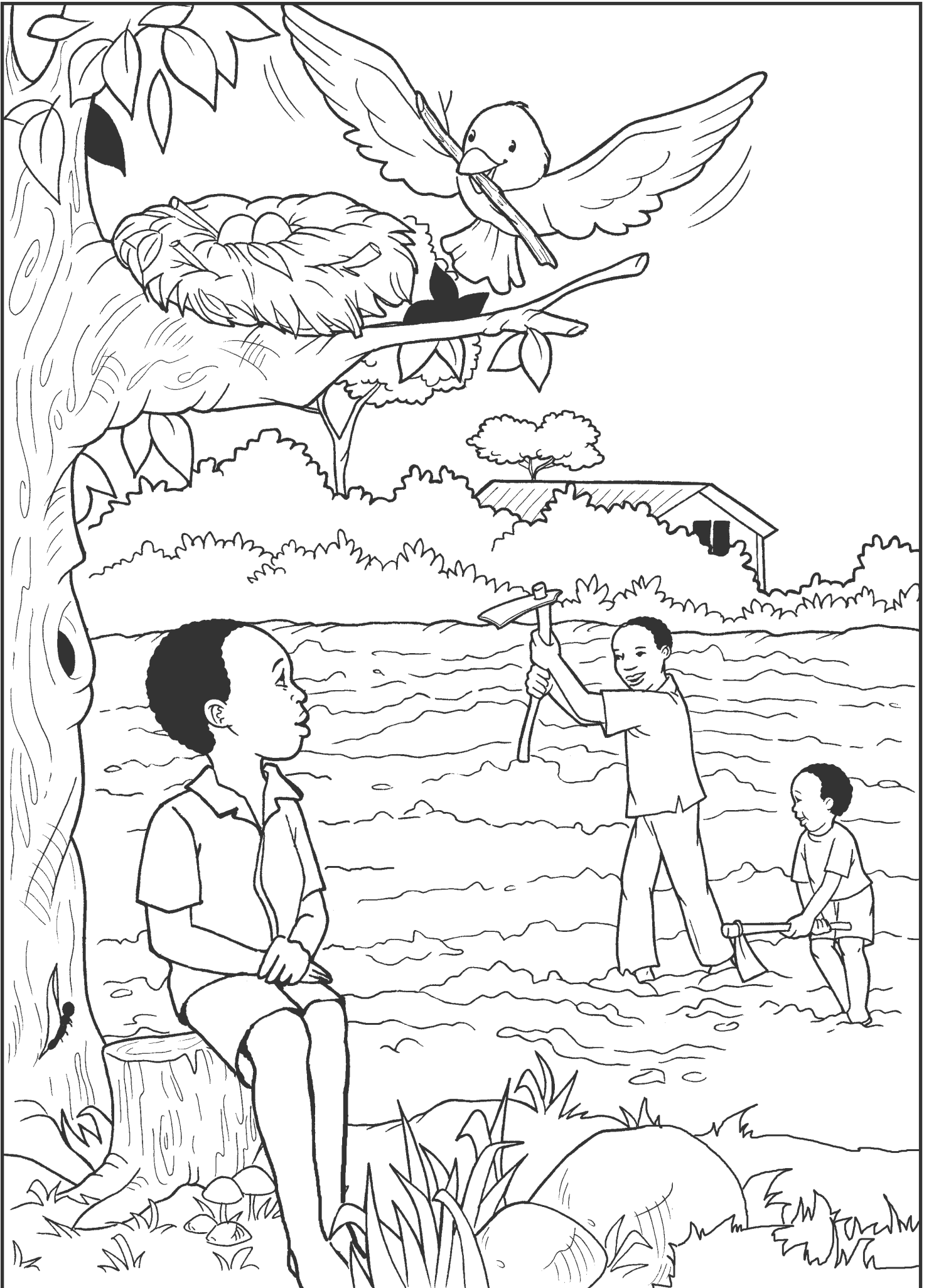
At first I thought it pleasant to be out alone, doing what I liked to do best, and not thinking of all the work needed to make our community a happy one. After awhile, however, I realized that the joy shared at the evening's supper, celebrating a good day's labor together, wouldn't be mine to share. But I thought, Ah, I can miss it this once.

Another thought came to my mind, Well, if I'm not doing my part, then who is? My little sister, working alongside my mother, carrying water to the working men and doing the simple chores? Would I want her to do my work before the evening came? No, she is too small. But who then? came the thought once more. Would my brother, who is two years older than me, now have to bear the weight for both of us? For the work had to be done if we were to survive with food for all to eat. My father had often told me the saying that goes, "Many hands make light work," and I knew the more hands that helped, the less work there was for each person.

As I sat under the tree, I made up my mind to return to my work, no matter how difficult it might be to face my family and friends and confess that I had spent the morning in idleness.

As I was about to get up and return to the fields, a thought came to me. I had thought that nature had a life of ease. I never noticed the animals at work, or laboring for their food, like we had to do. Then it was as if I heard the voice of my Creator saying, "Stop and look."





I turned my head down to see an ant, carrying upon his back what must to him have been a very large blade of grass. The blade was much longer than the little ant's body. I watched him struggle hard and long along a tree trunk, till he reached a place where there was a hole that he disappeared into. I supposed he and his friends had made themselves a home there. I imagined having to carry five bags of grain on my back, though I never had to do that. It made me admire his strength and diligence, working to make his home the very best.

Then I heard the loud squawk of a bird, and I glanced up to where it was on a branch. I saw the bird adding a new twig to her nest, to strengthen its place in the tree. I saw it was hard to do and that it required great skill and patience. It used its beak and feet but without hands it was difficult. I imagined what it would be like to try and do that job without using my hands. It would be almost impossible for me to do. Yet the bird worked willingly away, doing what needed to be done even though it was hard.

I felt ashamed for having gone away from the work in the fields, and for leaving my family to do more work than their share. I realized that all nature finds joy in working diligently. With a repentant heart I returned to the village, and made my way to the fields to lend a hand in whatever was left of the day's work.

I saw mother trying to lift something heavy, and I was there to bear it up for her. When she noticed me, she saw something different in my eyes, a look that said that now my work wasn't just one of duty, though that is a good motivation. No, now I wanted to help out of love and consideration.

That night, as I sat with my family at supper, I thought about my lesson that day. I wanted to be one with all creatures, who daily wake to work in the day as the Creator made them to do. I wanted our community to be a happy place to live. And I learned that when we all work together, completing each of our tasks, we can have joy. And when we rest and celebrate the work that has been done, we can be at peace knowing that we have done it with all our might.



- How did Muwamba's unfaithfulness and laziness hurt those he loved?
- What did Muwamba learn from studying the little creatures?
- Has God given each of us, even the small creatures, a job to do? What is your job or responsibility?
- Can we find joy in doing our work diligently and well?
- What are some ways we can learn to be faithful with our work and challenge ourselves to do better?

# The Potato Peeler

One sunny day, two young children, Pete and Jane, were playing football in the yard with their friends when their Grandpa called them in to wash the dishes. They did it, but not with their whole heart, for as you would expect, they would rather be outside playing than washing the dishes.

Pete turned on the tap to fill up the dish basin with water, but then forgot to turn it off because he was looking outside the window at some of his friends who were still outside playing ball.

"Look at that, John just kicked a goal!" Pete shouted.

"Oh, no! Pete! Look at the water!" Jane said.

"Oops! I'll get it!" Pete said, as he was suddenly brought back to reality and ran over to turn off the tap.

Just then Grandfather came in and looked at the floor, which was now flooded, and asked, "What happened, children?"

"I'm really sorry Grandpa! We were filling the sink with water to wash the dishes and..." Pete said apologetically.

Jane finished the explanation with, "...While we were watching the game outside, we forgot about it, and the water overflowed onto the floor!"

Grandpa handed Pete a mop and said, "Well, children, be sure to mop up every single drop! Remember that just a few drops of water on the floor can cause someone to slip and fall and have a bad accident!"

"Yes, Grandpa!" Pete said, as he began to mop up the mess.

Grandfather put his hand on Jane's shoulder and said, "See, you were talking and not keeping your mind on your job! I've done that before too. It reminds me of when my brother got me a job at the college's cafeteria kitchen, where he also worked. It was 1934 and I was 15 years old.

Two other friends were working with me. My friend Bob, said, "Boy! Peeling potatoes for 1000 students is a lot of hard work!—Especially before breakfast!"

I told him, "Well, at least the pay is really good!"

My other friend, Jack, said, "Yes, and it's fun to sit here and crack jokes together, and tell stories. Got any new jokes today, Bob?"

"No, you've heard all of my jokes already, but we could talk about what we are going to do with our paychecks. Why don't you go first?" Bob said as he pointed to me.

"I have to work to pay for my room and meals while I'm attending college! But I only have to work a few hours a day before meals. It helps me to work up a good appetite," I said.

Jack and Bob laughed at that remark, because by this time they were getting hungry too.

Just then the cook put on his apron to get ready for the day's work. Bob saw him first. "Hey, let's get busy! The cook is coming!"

The cook came over to us and said cheerily, "Good morning, boys! Today I have a surprise for you!" He rolled a huge clunky machine in front of us.

"Goodness me, Sir! What is that?" I asked.

"I will show you!" the cook said proudly, "Bob, please put all of the potatoes in that bag over there inside this metal container!"

"Is it going to wash the potatoes?" Jack asked curiously.

"Just wait and you'll see! This gadget is going to make our job a lot easier!"

After the potatoes were all safe and snug in the container, the cook was ready to start the machine.

"Good! Now I will close the lid and switch it on! Now, watch this, boys!" As the machine was spinning and clattering and rumbling like a hungry bear, the cook cautioned us, "Remember to never let the machine run for more than three minutes! There! Now come and look inside!" he said as he lifted the lid and we all gazed in wonder at the finished product.

"It's amazing! The potatoes are all peeled!" I said.

Jack added, "Look! All the peels come out here into this waste-container!"

"But how does it work?" I asked.

The cook was only too eager to explain his new toy, "First it slowly washes them. Inside the tub are lots of little rough bumps! Then the tub spins around and the bumps knock all the peels off the potatoes! Ohhh! And, boys, if you don't switch off the machine after three minutes, you are in trouble!"

Pete and Jane were listening intently to the story. Pete asked, "What would happen if you forgot to switch it off?"

"Let me tell you about the day we did just that. We came to the kitchen before the cook, as usual, and started work."

I looked at the menu and said, "Oh, no. It's fried potatoes again for breakfast! I don't know why those guys have to eat so much!" I didn't like to peel potatoes very much.

Bob tried to cheer me up, "Never mind! The potato peeler does most of the work for us!"

"Yes, switch it on," Jack told me. "And while modern technology is doing our work for us, we can relax and tell a few good jokes and stories!"

Bob asked me, "Tell me, how come your brother is so strong and you are so weak and skinny?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I mean, look at your brother, I've seen him carrying a huge stack of dirty dishes that must weigh 75 pounds on one hand. And I've even seen him turn flips in the air and land on his hands or feet - of course, not with the plates in his hand!"

"Well, my brother is quite strong! To answer your question, I guess that's the way the Lord made us. But I don't mind, because it makes me depend more on the Lord and His strength! Hey, that reminds me, did you guys hear the joke about the elephant and the mouse? One day a big elephant was walking through the jungle when he met a tiny mouse!

"The elephant said, 'Ha! You're so tiny and weak and small! Look at how big and strong I am!'"

"And the mouse peeped up in a squeaky voice, 'Yes, but...sigh!...I've been sick lately!'"

"Ha! Ha! That's a good one!" They all laughed.

"And did you hear the one about the ..."

Just then the cook came in a hurry, "HEY BOYS!! Where are the potatoes? We need the potatoes!"

"THE POTATOES?!!" we shouted in unison.

The cook could hear the machine still spinning around and shut it off and looked inside. He cried, "Oh no! You forgot the potatoes!"

"Uh-oh!" We all hung our heads in shame.

The cook scolded us, "While you've been talking and joking and having a good time, the potato-peeler has kept peeling and peeling and peeling, until now each potato is the size of a marble! Look! There's more potato in the waste-container than there is inside!" He said dramatically holding up the full waste bin for us to see.

"We're really sorry!" Bob apologized.

But the cook was not too sympathetic, "Yes, but 'sorry' doesn't fix it! There's 1000 hungry students upstairs waiting for potatoes! What's going to happen when I take these tiny little potatoes up there?!"

There wasn't much we could do because it was nearly breakfast time! So we took the tray of potatoes up. The students were very happy to see us, "At last! Here come the potatoes!" they shouted.

"Why are the potatoes so small?" one student asked.

Soon the principal in charge of the school came to us and said, "How could you boys be so careless? I thought you would be less foolish and much more responsible! So, this is your last chance, boys! One more mistake like that and you will lose your jobs! You will be OUT!"

"So, that's the story of the 'Potato-Peeler.' What lesson did you learn from that, Pete?"

Pete said, "I learned that you have to be careful while working and not goof off and play!"

Grandpa smiled at us, "Yes! You were not keeping your minds on your business. Remember, a bad accident or wasteful mistake can result when we're forgetful or foolish. Boy, I'll tell you, we kept our eye on the potato-peeler after that! That was the last time we ever forgot it! Whenever we turned the machine on we pulled out a stopwatch and counted, '2 minutes 57...58...59...3 minutes! SWITCH IT OFF!'"



- Are you faithful and diligent in your work duties? Look up these other verses: Proverbs 18:9, 22:29; 1 Corinthians 4:2.
- Did you ever waste something by being careless? Explain.
- Talk about the benefits you receive from being diligent and faithful.





# The Lost Bracelet

There was once a girl called Mandy who had a bracelet with a beautiful turquoise\* stone in it. The bracelet had come from America, and she was very proud of it.

But one day, after she had been out shopping, she found that the blue stone was gone. She had been into a number of shops, and although she went back and looked in all of them, she never found it. Mandy felt that it was hopeless—she would never see her beautiful blue stone again.

Oh, well, she thought, no use fretting. I had better do something useful. I'll clean out my kitchen. The kitchen was quite small, so the job was soon done. But then a little voice inside her seemed to say, "You haven't cleaned out the saucepan cupboard."

Oh, no, she thought, I really don't feel like cleaning out the saucepan cupboard.

"But the job isn't properly done till you have," the little voice pointed out.

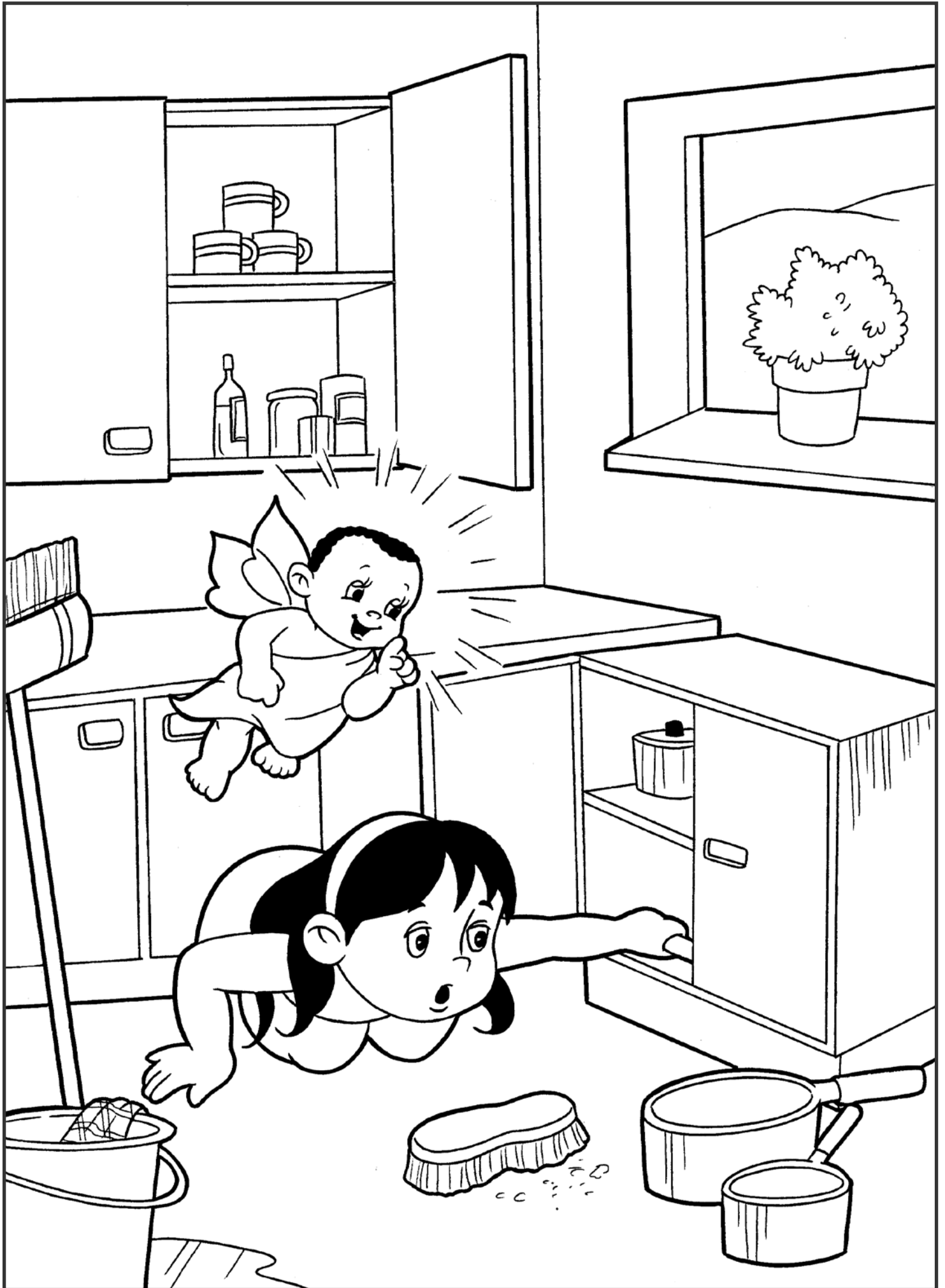
"Oh, very well," said Mandy at last. She pulled all the saucepans out of the cupboard and swept right to the back of it. As she pulled the brush out, something seemed to rattle. Was it a pebble? A crumb of dry bread? No, it was a little blue thing—her precious turquoise stone. How glad she was that she had listened to the small voice inside her and done the job thoroughly. It was like a little present for having obeyed and been faithful and diligent in her work!



- What lesson did Mandy learn?
- What if she hadn't been faithful to clean out the saucepan cupboard?
- Are you faithful and diligent in your work? If you are, God will reward you. He's always watching and He sees your faithfulness.

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\*turquoise: a blue or green semi-precious stone



# The Bear Story!

We were traveling through the western part of America that summer. Everyone was tired from driving, so we decided to camp out for the night at a national park.

After our nice picnic dinner, it was time to clean up.

"Jonathan and Faith, while Mommy and I put up the tent, can you please finish putting the food away and wipe down the tablecloth really well?"

"Sure, Dad," the children chorused.

"Hey, Faith, come check this out. It's a bird's nest right here on the ground!" Jonathan shouted.

"Oh my, I wonder where it came from."

They got so involved in other things that they didn't do a good job of cleaning up!

As I was putting up the tent I thought, Maybe I can drape the tablecloth over our tent. That way if it rains, our tent will have less chance of leaking.

By this time it was dark and I didn't notice that the tablecloth hadn't been wiped off well enough, so there were little bits of food and crumbs on it.

That night ...

"What's that noise?" my wife said, startled.

"It's a bear! On no! It looks like he's trying to lick the food off the tablecloth!"

"He's so huge and his paws are so sharp. I hope he doesn't make a hole in our tent ..."

"Or fall on top of us!"

"Dear Jesus, please show us what to do in this dangerous situation. Please protect us from this hungry bear!"

Well, when you hear a bear huffing and puffing and licking your tent about four inches from your ear, you'll think of the story of the wolf that said to the little pig, "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down!"

When he started scraping the tablecloth with his paw, I decided it was time to get out! Because bears' paws are quite heavy and strong, and I was afraid he was about to knock the tent down on top of our heads!

"What are we going to do?" my wife asked.

I ran out yelling and screaming with a hatchet and flashlight and chased him off!

"Get out of here!" I hollered.

My young son Jonathan and my daughter Faith were sleeping in the back of the car with the door slightly open for air. Dear Jonathan was very smart. When he heard us screaming, "There's a bear in the camp!" he reached up and pulled down the door and slammed it shut, with him and Faith safely inside!

After the bear was gone and we were no longer in danger, I had a good talk with the children. We all learned that we should be faithful and diligent in our duties, because little bits of unfaithfulness can cause serious accidents or put us in a very dangerous situation!



- Where did the children go wrong when they were asked to clean the table?
- Do you think they did a good job of cleaning the table next time?
- What are some little things that can cause big problems if we're not faithful with them?
- Talk about some sicknesses and diseases that can be avoided by good hygiene and keeping your house or school tidy and clean.





# Prayer and Praise

Dear Jesus, thank You for teaching me how important it is to be faithful in the little things. Please help me to be faithful and diligent in everything I do. Amen.

# Memory Fun



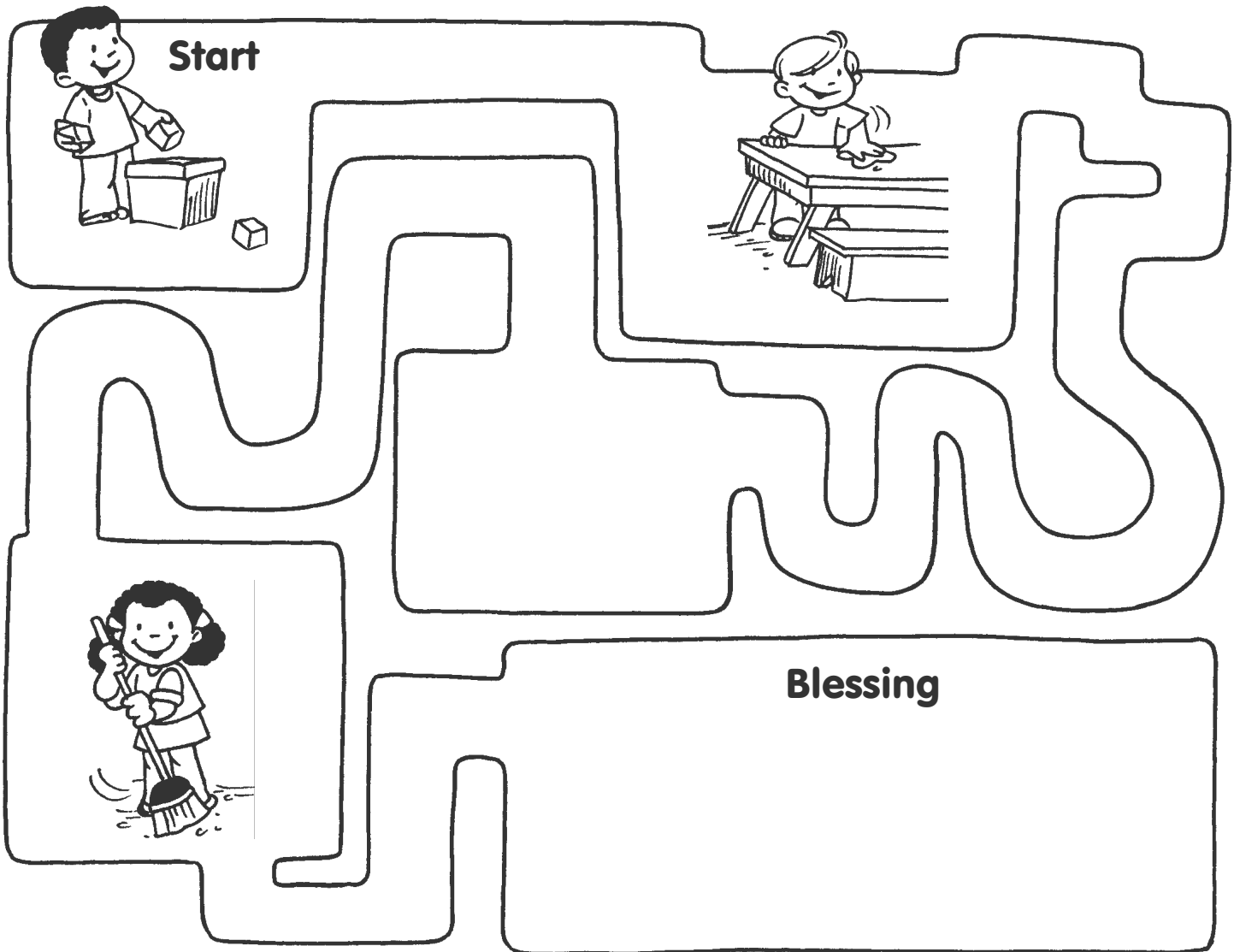
He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

Luke 16:10

### Faithfulness Maze

Follow this maze and see how you can be faithful to help others.

When you get to the blank box in the middle, draw a picture of something you can be faithful in. In the last box, draw a special blessing that the Lord may give you for your faithfulness.



**A faithful man will abound with  
blessings.**

Proverbs 28:20

# Pencil Page

## Faithfulness Word Search



Be faithful until death, and I will give you a crown of life. Revelation 2:10

Look for the two hidden verses on faithfulness in the Word Search below. Circle all the words found. The letters are arranged vertically, horizontally and diagonally.

And let us not grow weary while doing good: for in due season we shall reap if we do not loose heart.  
Galatians 6:9



I	C	G	H	A	G	R	A	V	W	S	Q	L	B	W
X	L	D	E	I	C	A	D	Z	F	U	E	U	I	T
P	S	T	H	Y	T	K	S	Y	R	I	O	R	K	Z
I	H	T	B	E	P	D	U	E	E	T	R	L	D	T
S	A	M	F	T	I	N	O	F	A	X	V	F	L	D
H	L	I	R	H	W	T	T	I	P	S	N	A	R	G
F	L	N	C	O	N	A	H	F	N	V	O	I	C	L
T	M	C	R	U	S	H	E	W	X	G	T	N	M	G
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B	C	G	Y	I	R	Q	<b>B</b>	<b>E</b>	T	N	M	E	O	B
F	G	F	U	H	D	Y	L	E	T	P	T	S	S	M
T	R	Q	U	E	R	N	D	A	S	F	R	L	P	N

# Make and Do

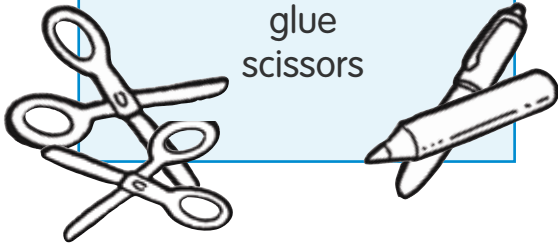


## Helping Hands



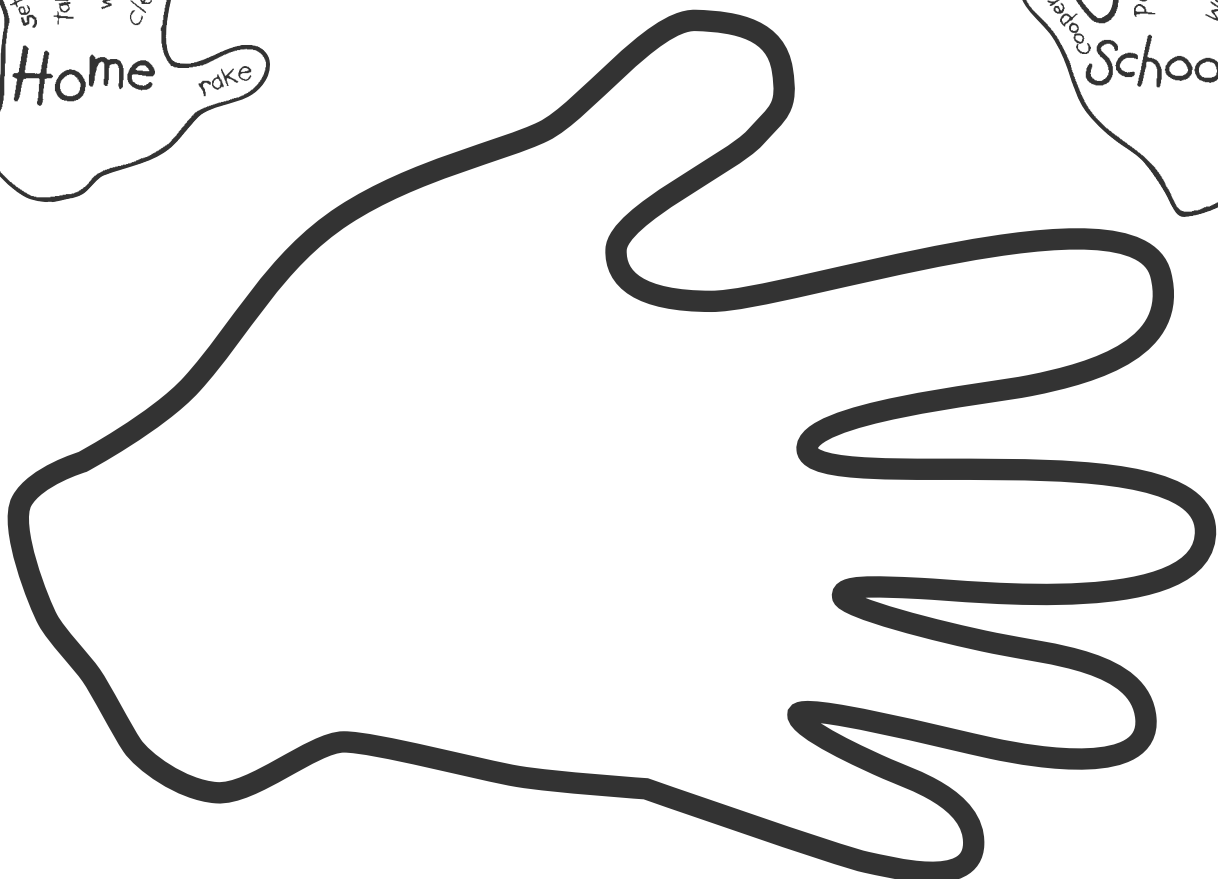
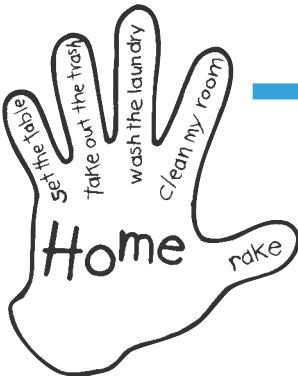
### You will need:

paper  
colors  
pencil  
glue  
scissors



**How to:**  
Can you think of ways in which you can help at home or at school? Make a helping hands mural on a piece of colorful paper or bulletin board.

- Trace and cut out the hand shape below.
- You can make two hands, one for helping at home and one for helping at school.
- Write on the fingers the ways you can help others.
- Color in the hands.
- Write your name at the bottom.
- Display them on a bulletin board or colorful card paper.



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# From Jesus—with Love



Do you sometimes find it hard to be diligent and faithful in your work? If you do, then just ask Me to help you be faithful, and then do you know what you do next? Just be faithful with each little thing you have to do. You don't have to wake up in the morning and worry that you're not going to be faithful and diligent in every single little thing there is to do that day; you just have to be faithful with the first little thing there is to do.

There's a verse in the Bible that says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). So why don't you claim that verse and just do your best to be faithful in each thing you're doing. It's very important to learn to be faithful and diligent, because if you're faithful with a few things, I can trust you with more. If you're faithful with the little jobs, I can trust you with bigger jobs, and if you take care of the little things I give you, I can give you more! So, let's be faithful in everything, shall we? How do we do that? By just being faithful right now, this very moment! I love you!



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